

We commit ourselves – one shelf, one wall, one village at a time – to create community libraries in Africa.

Mission

Our mission is to become the best community library in the nation by being so tuned in to the people we serve and so supportive of each other's efforts that we are able to provide highly responsive service. We strive to inform, enrich and empower every person in our community by creating and promoting easy access to a vast array of ideas and information, and by supporting an informed citizenry, lifelong learning and love of reading. We acquire, organize and provide books and other relevant materials; ensure access to information sources throughout the nation and around the world; serve our public with expert and caring assistance; and reach out to all members of our community.

Aims

We intend to provide:

- Services that are understood and valued by the community and result in library use and involvement from the broadest possible spectrum of residents.
- A caring, welcoming and lively cultural and lifelong learning center for the community.
- Outstanding reference, readers' advisory and borrower services that are barrier free for users of all ages, regardless of ethnic background, educational level, economic status or physical condition.
- Collections of enduring value and contemporary interest that are relevant to user needs and readily accessible from every service point.
- A highly trained and competent staff that reflects the rich diversity of our community and that works together to provide responsive service to all users.
- Appropriate technology to extend, expand and enhance services in every neighborhood and ensure that all users have equitable access to information.
- Facilities that are inviting, safe and well maintained and that are available during hours of greatest convenience to users and equitably distributed throughout the City.
- Careful stewardship of the public trust, which ensures accountability and makes the most efficient and effective use of funds, both public and private; fosters collaboration, cooperation and co-location where possible with other agencies; and builds public/private partnerships to enhance services to our users.

Organizational Values

Service to our users is our reason for being. Those who need us most should be our highest priority.

- All employees, volunteers and friends of the Library are valued as human beings and for their important contributions to our service.
- We are a learning organization that is open, collegial, and risk-taking; we nurture our talents and each other and constantly reassess our services and methods to adapt to the changing needs of our community.
- We support and encourage intellectual freedom.
- All Library services are provided in a nonpartisan and non-judgmental manner that is sensitive to and supportive of human differences.

Both staff and patrons are encouraged to laugh often and out loud.

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The present state of education and academia in Ethiopia is troubling to say the least. According to the project Ethiopia Reads, 58% of Ethiopians age 15 and above cannot read. Although one might not guess it from a country with a literacy rate well below 50%, classes in government schools tend to hold approximately 180 students at a time. This sort of overcrowding of educational facilities prevents individual students from getting the adequate attention which they deserve, while also placing an extraordinarily unfair burden on the teachers or professors who lead these classes; this compounds the additional burden of general resource scarcity in Ethiopian schools. This lack of educational infrastructure and resources is further evidenced by the fact that, at present, 99% of schools in Ethiopia have no libraries whatsoever. What is worse, the few libraries in Ethiopia are also underfunded and poorly maintained, although,

Community Library

Written by Administrator

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according to the World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services , Ethiopia has over 6,000 reading rooms. In light of these needs, we would like to start our project in Ethiopia. This will entail a three step program.

One Shelf:

We will start by placing a single shelf of content in preexisting libraries. The contents of this shelf will be written in Amharic or the local language that corresponds to the area immediately surrounding the one-shelf library. Of course, this is not mutually exclusive with the other, English works being housed within the library or reading room; rather, it is a complimentary step we believe should have been taken long ago. Our project will provide books which are best suited to address the particular interests of each village and then use these books to construct a one-shelf library, which will include a minimum amount of teenage and children's fiction, in conjunction with more adult works of poetry and literature. We cannot wait for large libraries to be built and founded; we must start immediately and do what we can.

Adoption of Libraries and Reading Rooms:

In addition to these measures, our project will seek to adopt preexisting libraries. We will contact existing libraries and reading rooms, both privately and government owned, which are lacking in funding and book updates. Then we will negotiate with these libraries about how to best meet their needs – providing at least one professional librarian in conjunction with a continuous supplement of books. In exchange, we ask that the facility grants public access to its resources for all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, political ideology, or religion.